

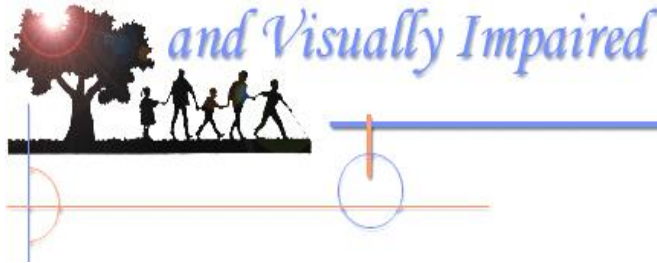
FOCUS ON SUCCESS III

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 2, 2008

BEST WESTERN RAMKOTA INN, SIOUX FALLS, SD



*SD School for the Blind
and Visually Impaired*





2008 Focus on Success Agenda At A Glance



Tuesday, September 30

Time	Activity		
8:00 – 10:00 am Pre-conference	Tour of SD State Penitentiary Braille Unit -Pre Registration Required		
	Tour of SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind		
10:00 am	Registration Open		
1:00 – 1:30pm	Welcome and Opening Remarks		
1:30 – 3:00pm	Keynote- Olegario D. Cantos VII		
3:00 – 3:30pm	Break		
3:30 – 5:00pm	Olegario D. Cantos VII- The IEP Process & Your Rights	SDSBVI Consultants- A Day In the Life Of	Pris Rogers- AFB Senior Site
5:30 – 8:00 pm	Social / Vendor Fair		

Wednesday, October 1

Time	Activity		
8:00am - 9:30am	Pris Rogers- AFB Career Connect	Sandy Ruconich- Informed Choice for Children	Dan Roberts- Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)
9:30am - 10:30am	Break / Vendor Presentations		
10:30am- 12:00pm	Ardis Bazyn- Coping with Challenges	Doug Halverson- NAPVI	Dan Roberts- AMD
12:00pm - 1:30pm	Luncheon with Keynote: Ardis Bazyn		
1:30pm - 3:00pm	Sue Birrenkott- Transition Service Options	Outreach Consultants- Parenting a Child w/ a Visual Impairment	O&M Specialists- Options in O&M
3:00pm - 3:30pm	Break		
3:30pm – 5:00pm	Voc Unit- Securing a Job w/ Vision Loss	Maureen McGowan, Rose Moehring, Teresa Nold - Dual Sensory Loss & Service Options	Dawn Backer & Marva Gellhaus- Low Vision Options for Young and Old
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Round Table Discussions Maureen McGowan – HKNC & Doug Halverson - NAPVI		

Thursday, October 2

Time	Activity		
7:30am – 8:00am	Continental Breakfast		
8:00am - 9:30am	Brett Humphrey- From South Dakota to Microsoft	Karen Gerety & Ernetta Fox- Success in College	Dakotalink- Assistive Tech Options
9:30am - 10:00am	Break		
10:00am - 11:30am	Success Panel: Brett Humphrey, Ollie Cantos, Ardis Bazyn, Keith Bundy, Mike Klimisch		
11:30am – noon	Closing		

NOTES

Tuesday September 30, 2008

10:00 - 1:00 **Registration**
East Lobby

1:00 - 3:00 **General Session**
Lincoln Room **Welcome and Opening Remarks-** Gaye Mattke

Keynote- Olegario D. Cantos VII

Mr. Cantos shares the experiences that encouraged him and the tools that made him successful.

3:00 - 3:30 **Break**

3:30 - 5:00 **Breakout Sessions**

Amphitheater II **Parents' Rights & the Individualized Education Plan**
Employment **Process -** Olegario D. Cantos VII

This presentation will provide tools and guidance for assisting parents and students with disabilities in identifying and obtaining training, services, and determining viable career options.

Conference Rm. 2 **A Day In the Life Of... - SDSBVI Consultants**
Education

Hands-on experiences with various materials and activities to help gain an understanding of how vision loss impacts the life of a child/student who is blind or visually impaired.

Lincoln Room **AFB Senior Site - Pris Rogers**
Adult Services

This site has helpful information and solutions for seniors with eye conditions and their friends and family. Finding help for living with vision loss can be daunting. Featured on AFB Senior Site are the public and private agencies available in states and communities across the country that provides specialized services for people with vision conditions. <http://www.afb.org/seniorsitehome.asp>

5:30 - 8:00 p.m. **Evening Social & Vendor Fair**
Washington Room

Vendors will be available to demonstrate a variety of devices and services. Door prizes will be awarded to those who visit each vendor. Hourdevours and beverages will be served with a cash bar available.

Wednesday October 1, 2008

7:30 - 8:00 **Continental Breakfast**
Washington Room

8:00 - 9:30 **Breakout Sessions**

Amphitheater II **AFB Career Connect - Pris Rogers**
Employment

AFB CareerConnect®—a free resource for people who want to learn about the range and diversity of jobs performed by adults who are blind or visually impaired throughout the United States and Canada. Whether you are a student exploring careers, a job seeker investigating work options, an employer planning to diversify your workforce, a professional working with visually impaired people; or, a friend or family member assisting someone who is blind or has low vision, this web site can help you!
<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=7>

Lincoln Room **Helping Children Learn to Make Informed Choices-**
Education **Sandy Ruconich**

Sandy is currently an assistive technology specialist at the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind and has been a teacher for over 30 years. Sandy draws on her knowledge and experience to share guidance with her audience on how to help children with disabilities make informed choices.

Jefferson Room **Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) - Dan Roberts**
Adult Services

A discussion of the four elements of living successfully with low vision: Tenacity, Adaptability, Support and Knowledge - TASK.

9:30 - 10:30 **Break & Vendor Presentations**
Washington Room

10:30 - 12:00 **Breakout Sessions**

Amphitheater II **Coping with Challenges and Change to Find Employment**
Employment **- Ardis Bazyn**

Key points in this presentation include viewing challenges or obstacles as opportunities, measuring your resources critically (people, money, and skills), sharing valuable online resources, setting reachable goals and timelines, discouraging outside influences from impeding your progress, and finding the right employment option for you.

(Breakout Sessions - Continued)

Lincoln Room
Education

NAPVI & Family Connect- Doug Halverson

This presentation is designed to help parents learn more about the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) and the resources that are available.

Jefferson Room **AMD- Dan Roberts**
Adult Services

A continued discussion of the four elements of living successfully with low vision: Tenacity, Adaptability, Support and Knowledge - **TASK**.

12:00 - 1:30 **Luncheon**
Washington **Keynote- Ardis Bazyn**

1:30 - 3:00 **Breakout Sessions**

Lincoln Room **Transition Service Options – Sue Birrenkott**
Employment

The session will focus on the various activities and programs available to students to assist them in identifying and achieving their goals for independence. A panel of students who are blind and visually impaired will speak on their involvement in these activities and discuss strategies that have helped them direct their own transitions.

Jefferson Room **Parenting a Child With a Visual Impairment**
Education **SDSBVI Outreach Consultants**

This session focuses on the various activities and programs available to parents to assist them in finding resources and support in raising a child with a visual impairment. A panel of parents from SD who have children who are blind and visually impaired will speak on their involvement in these activities and discuss strategies that have helped them. These parents have recently started a SD chapter of the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI).

Amphitheater II **Options in Orientation & Mobility**
Adult Services **SDSBVI and Rehab Center O&M Specialists**

An overview of (1) a "traditional" O&M program of instruction; (2) cane choices for independent travel; (3) electronic travel aids; and (4) dog guide training programs. Information addresses all age levels of individuals in need of O&M.

3:00 - 3:30 **Break**

3:30 - 5:00 **Breakout Sessions**

Lincoln Room
Employment

Securing a Job With Vision Loss Rehab Center Vocational Resources

This presentation will cover pertinent job strategies about the reality of securing a job in the new millennium and include:

- The reality of doing online applications with assistive technology.
- When is the right time to disclose your vision loss?
- When is the right time to talk about assistive technology needs?
- Interviewing techniques and what to be prepared for.
- Writing an effective resume.
- Skills and abilities; assistive technology.

Amphitheater II Meeting Needs of Students & Adults w/ Dual Sensory Loss

Education

Maureen McGowan, Rose Moehring, & Teresa Nold

A brief overview of who qualifies as Deaf-Blind and the service delivery system for children and adults with combined hearing and vision loss will be provided to participants. Participants will also be provided with information regarding the following:

- The impact of a combined hearing and vision loss, and necessary accommodations
- The "Transition Guide for Youths who are Deaf-Blind"
- Assistive technology for Deaf-Blind individuals
- Considerations when using an interpreter
- Employment Opportunities

Jefferson Room Low Vision Options for Young and Old

Adult Services

Dawn Backer and Marva Gellhaus

Presenters will share how to determine the right low vision device(s) for a person and how to obtain those devices. This will be a hands-on presentation of the different types of low vision devices and practical techniques of using your remaining vision more effectively.

5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Round Table Discussions

Room to be Announced

- Want to know more about Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) services? This is an opportunity to dialogue with Maureen McGowan, HKNC Regional Representative.
- Doug Halverson, Board President for the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) will be available to discuss NAPVI and resources for parents.

Thursday, October 2, 2008

7:30 - 8:00 **Continental Breakfast**
Washington Room

8:00 - 9:30 **Breakout Sessions**

Amphitheater II **From South Dakota to Microsoft - Brett Humphrey**
Employment

Brett will share his background growing up with low vision while working toward graduation from both high school and the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and how he ended up working at Microsoft. Through this discussion he'll touch on a few key lessons he's learned; people that have assisted him, and discuss how these situations may be of value to others. The rest of the presentation will be Question & Answer as Brett enjoys interacting and talking with the audience.

Lincoln Room **Success in College - Karen Gerety and Ernetta Fox**
Education

This presentation will give attendees a look into the process students should follow in order to ensure they get the accommodations they need for college classes. Most students with vision issues are aware that they might have to ask for accommodations but may not know where to start. The presenters hope to "demystify" the process, and let students and parents know what they can expect and what responsibilities the student will have as he/she enters college.

Jefferson Room **Assistive Technology Options - Ted Carrell**
Adult Services

Ted will provide an overview of a variety of Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTVs) from portables to computer compatible units.

9:30 - 10:00 **Break**

10:00 - 11:30 **Success Stories Panel**
Lincoln Room Moderator:

Panelists: Olegario D. Cantos VII, Brett Humphrey, Sandy Ruconich, AER, Ardis Bazyn, Keith Bundy, Mike Klimisch

11:30 - noon **Closing Remarks**
Lincoln Room

Olegario D. Cantos VII

Blind since birth, Olegario “Ollie” D. Cantos VII became one of the highest-placed people with a disability in the federal government today when he accepted a commission from Former Attorney General John D. Ashcroft in August 2004 to serve as Special Assistant to Assistant Attorney General R. Alexander Acosta in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.



Responsibilities include fostering closer ties between the Department and disability rights leaders at all levels, enhancing roll-out of Project Civic Access, expanding the ADA Business Connection increased the number of state building codes to become ADA certified, and establishing and strengthening new cross-agency partnerships to enhance national disability rights enforcement.

A graduate of Loyola Law School in 1997 and Loyola Marymount University in 1992, Mr. Cantos continues to write on a range of topics. He wrote a comprehensive toolkit for assisting students and job seekers with disabilities in identifying and determining viable career options. Mr. Cantos has also written a series of widely-circulated online bulletins that addressed issues including transportation, special education, veterans' benefits, physical accessibility, the criminal justice system, the arts, religion, and employment. He has also appeared on radio and television and in newspapers and magazines and has written articles for nationally-circulated periodicals including “The Braille Monitor” and “Future Reflections.” He also edited a candid book on experiences of people who are blind, and he was featured in a 1991 book published by the National Federation of the Blind.

A three-time finisher of the 26.2-mile Los Angeles Marathon, hobbies include rollerblading, horseback riding, and exercise. Mr. Cantos is also a science fiction fan and loves being involved with his church and community. He is often noted for his energy and enthusiasm and derives inspiration from God, his family, books on personal development, and various mentors he has had throughout his life. In the words of Dr. Jonathon Young, formerly with the White House Office of Public Liaison, “Ollie Cantos has an abiding passion for making the world a better place. He has a capacity for channeling his extraordinary level of energy to produce not just great results in his own work, but also to inspire those around him to do more and do better. His enthusiasm is infectious! Ollie is a deeply caring person, someone who takes his work seriously because he knows it makes a real difference in the lives of real people.”

Priscilla (Pris) Rogers

National Independent Living Associate
American Foundation of the Blind (AFB)

Areas of Expertise:

- Aging and vision loss
- Rehabilitation and independent living



Priscilla Rogers is the National Independent Living Associate at the AFB Center on Vision Loss in Dallas. She was previously consultant in vision and aging with the AFB in Tennessee. Her background includes a degree in gerontology and in special education with an emphasis in vision and aging.

Dr. Rogers is the former director of the Adjustment Training Program for Older Blind at the Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind, where she ran one of the first programs in the country that served older persons with visual impairments and that was funded by the Older Americans Act. She also served as Commissioner of the Department for the Blind in Kentucky, where she successfully wrote and directed a special three-year national project funded by the Administration on Aging to demonstrate how older persons with vision loss can be served jointly through both the aging and vision services networks. In addition, she has served as director of Channel Markers for the Blind (now the Watson Center), and Bureau Chief of Client Services for the Florida Division of Blind Services.

Dr. Rogers has authored several articles on vision and aging and was co-author of the recently published, **Aging and Vision Loss: A Handbook for Families**. Her other works include **Self-Advocacy Skills Training for Older Individuals Who Are Visually Impaired**, **Solutions for Success: A Training Manual for Working with Older People Who Are Visually Impaired**, and the video **Solutions for Everyday Living for Older People with Visual Impairments**.

Dan Roberts

Founding Director
MD Support, Inc. and
International Macular Degeneration Support Group



Dan Roberts is the founding director of MD Support Inc. and the International Macular Degeneration Support Group. These non profit organizations offer support and information to people around the world who are affected by macular degeneration. He is the recipient of the 2004 Distinguished Service Award presented by the American Optometric Association Low Vision Rehabilitation Section.

Dan Roberts is an educator, author, composer, theatrical director, and musician. He founded MD Support in 1995 as a result of his own need for support and information about vision loss.

Retired since 1995 from 23 years in public school education and 33 years in church music ministry, he continues to teach at his own performing arts school, which he founded in 1984. In addition, he writes articles for print and internet publications and provides presentations about vision impairment for low vision conferences, schools, community organizations and support groups.

He is the author of *The First Year--Age-Related Macular Degeneration* (Marlowe & Co., New York, NY, 2006) and is a consultant for pharmaceutical companies, lighting manufacturers, and dealers in protective eyewear. He is a Scholar with the Roundtable Group Expert Services Firm and a member of the low vision panel of the Society of Industry Leaders (SIL) under the auspices of Standard & Poor's Vista Research. He is a member of the Low Vision Leadership Consortium and the Low Vision Rehabilitation Group.

Dan Roberts is a graduate of the University of Missouri with a master's degree in education. He is the recipient of the 2004 Distinguished Service Award presented by the American Optometric Association Low Vision Rehabilitation Section. This is the highest honor given by the LVRS to an organization or individual for contributions to low vision care and distinguished service to the general welfare of the public. His organization was also awarded the National Eye Institute's 2006 Healthy Vision Community Award for innovative approaches to vision-related health education.

Ardis Bazyn

Bazyn Communications



Ardis Sue Bazyn is an inspirational speaker, coach, and writer. As the owner of Bazyn Communications, she's written three books on image building for churches, organizations, and businesses.

Ardis Bazyn, Born in Alvord, IA, to parents, Arie and Gert Kiel, graduated from West Lyon high school, Inwood, IA. When she lost her sight in a car accident at the age of 20, she had worked as a bookkeeper-receptionist for The Book Store in Sioux Falls, SD, and as a proof dispatcher for the Sioux Falls Argus-Leader newspaper. After completing rehabilitation and food service management training, she was given the opportunity to manage a snack bar in the Argus-Leader. Later, she moved on to other food service facilities in South Dakota and Iowa.

Through the years, Ardis was frequently asked to speak on different topics and to work on writing projects. As wife of a husband with multi-disabilities and parent of two pre-teen daughters, she took the additional challenge of going back to college while working full-time in her food service business. In 1996, she received two BA degrees in Public Relations and speech Communications. In 1998, she received her Master's Degree in Arts in Teaching. She wanted the necessary skills to become a more accomplished speaker, coach, and writer.

She says, "Several life changing events have taught me patience, courage, and the importance of a positive attitude." Her youngest sister, Julie, had been killed in a car accident months before the accident in which she lost her sight. Years later, she struggled with the death of her father, caring for her spouse, changing careers, moving across the country, and having a mild heart attack. She realized she enjoyed helping others cope with challenges and improve their lives.

After leaving the food service management field, Ardis decided to start her current business. She moved to Burbank, CA, in 1999, and found a demand for printed and audio materials in the subjects on which she speaks. Having written many articles and manuals on a variety of subjects in the past, she felt compelled to start her current project.

Despite a mild heart attack in May of 2000, she did not stop her efforts to write her books. In the spring of 2002, she published her first book: *BUILDING BLOCKS TO SUCCESS: Does the Image of Your Church Attract Members?* Her second book, *BUILDING BLOCKS TO SUCCESS Does the Image of Your Organization Attract Members?*, was printed in July 2002. She was excited when her third book in this series, *BUILDING BLOCKS TO SUCCESS: Does the Image of Your Business Attract Customers and Motivate Employees?* was released. She offers all of her books in audio format as well.

Maureen McGowan

Maureen ("Mo") McGowan has worked in the field of Deaf-Blindness for over 30 years. She is the Regional Representative for the Rocky Mountain Region, representing Helen Keller National Center. The center provides comprehensive evaluation and training to adults from around the country who are visually and hearing impaired. She has taught Orientation and Mobility, Low Vision applications, and related Independent Living Skills. She provides on-site consultation, education and training techniques to consumers, teachers and family members. Her workshops cover common etiologies and prognoses in the field of deaf/blindness, transition issues and employment opportunities. Maureen is available to attend student IEP's and provide hands on techniques when necessary. maureen.mcgowan@hknc.org

Rose Moehring

Rose has worked in the field of Deaf-Blindness for approximately ten years. She is currently Project Coordinator for the Director of the Center for Disabilities Deaf Blind Program, which is part of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine. In this role, she provides consultation, resources, and training opportunities to families and service providers; in order that the unique needs of children with combined hearing and vision loss might be met. Previous work experience includes serving as the Deaf Blind Program Specialist for the South Dakota Department of Human Services, a position developed through an affiliate program with Helen Keller National Center. In this role, she provided technical assistance to service providers working with adult deaf blind consumers served by Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and/or any one of several state agencies serving individuals with developmental disabilities. Rose has also served as a Qualified Mental Retardation Professional and social worker, during her employment at the South Dakota Developmental Center. Rose has a Master's Degree in Special Education (emphasis in severe and profound disabilities), and a Bachelors Degree in Social Work, from the University of South Dakota. She is also a certified low vision therapist. Rose comes from a Deaf Culture/American Sign Language background having been raised by deaf parents.

Teresa Nold

Teresa works as a Family Specialist for the Center for Disabilities Deaf-Blind Program, which is part of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine. She is also a Deaf-Blind Specialist for Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. Her role as a Family Specialist involves working with families to assist them in accessing resources and services available and developing portfolios on their kids. Her role as a Deaf-Blind Specialist includes working with adults who are deaf-blind to assist them with independent living or employment issues.

Teresa comes from parents who are deaf and has siblings who are deaf as well. She is married to Tim, who is deaf and together they have 2 kids, Isaac who is 11 years old and is very laid back and easy going, who is also deaf-blind with additional disabilities, and Caleb, a busy 7 year old boy. English and American Sign Language are used in their home.

Brett Humphrey

Brett lives in Washington State and has been employed by Microsoft since 1998 following two successful summer internships. He was a software design engineer for the product called DirectX and helped to create the building blocks that allow game developers to write programs that work correctly.

A computer science major at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology near his birth place, Humphrey used accommodations such as JAWS DECTalk to help him read lengthy documents. He also does some work visually by using a large monitor and a closed-circuit television for enlarging hard copy print.

Karen Gerety

Karen has been working as the Director of Disability Services at Northern State University since 2000. Prior to that, she worked as the graduate assistant in the office while she attended graduate school in the Counseling program at Northern. She received her Masters of Science in Education from NSU in 2003. Before coming to South Dakota, Karen was employed as a case manager assisting individuals with developmental disabilities. Her past experience also includes Social Services and Activities in a long-term care facility. Karen received her Bachelors degree in psychology from Emporia State University in Emporia Kansas.

Ernetta Fox

Ernetta has been the Director of Disability Services at the University of South Dakota since November of 2004. Previous positions held at the University of South Dakota include Director of Outreach and Education with the Wegner Health Science Information Center and Director of Information and Resources with the Center for Disabilities. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of South Dakota and a Master of Library Science degree from Southern Connecticut State University.

Riki Nitz- SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Riki Nitz is employed as an Outreach Vision Consultant for the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, serving students in the western half of the state for the past 19 years. She received her Master's degree in Orientation and Mobility from San Francisco State College in 1972, and is a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist®. In 2003, she received certification as a Low Vision Therapist, and in 2005, she completed the Low Vision Rehabilitation Certificate Program at Pennsylvania College of Optometry. A native of Montana, and prior to moving to South Dakota, Riki worked for the adult agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Montana for 5 years as an O/M Specialist serving adults across the state of Montana. She moved to South Dakota in 1977 and was employed by the SD adult agency for the Blind for 12 years as the O/M Specialist at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Sioux Falls. Riki is active in AER and has served on the Dakotas Chapter AER Board. She is active in church and is an organist/keyboardist and choir member.

Dawn Backer- SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Dawn Backer is the Manager of the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) in Sioux Falls and is a Certified Low Vision Therapist. Dawn began working for SBVI in 1985 as a field Rehabilitation Teacher in the Sioux Falls district office. After 2 ½ years in that position she moved to the SDRC to provide statewide low vision services. In 2004 Dawn has promoted to Manager of the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and continues in this position. Dawn has been a RehabACTion member for 5 years and served as secretary for one. Dawn attended SD State University receiving a BS in Family and Consumer Science, as well as Pennsylvania College of Optometry for low vision therapy.

Marva Gellhaus

Marva provides low vision services at the South Dakota School for the Blind & Visually Impaired, serving students throughout the state of South Dakota. She received her BS and MS from Northern State University and her PhD from the University of North Dakota. She completed a one-month low vision internship at the Philadelphia Center for the Blind. She taught elementary school in Sioux Falls and middle school in Elk Point, SD. At the university level she taught special education at Northern State University and Dakota State University for eleven years. Her current area of special interest is learning how complications within the anatomy of the eye and within the visual cortex impact the reading process.

Sandy Ruconich - AER

Sandy holds Bachelor's degrees in music and English, a Master's degree in special education in the area of the visually handicapped, and a doctorate in special education, the area of visual impairment, with emphasis in technology. For more than 30 years she has been involved in education, teaching students from primary to graduate level. She is currently an assistive technology specialist at the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind and is the past president of AER.

Ted Carrell - DakotaLink

Ted began working with DakotaLink in July of 1998 and has been working in the rehabilitation field for the past sixteen years. Ted was the computer instructor at the South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Sioux Falls before transferring his skills to Dakota State University as the Assistive Technology Specialist for Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. Ted has over sixteen years experience in assistive technology and computer hardware/software setup and configuration and has degrees in Computer Science and Business.

Sue Birrenkott - SD School for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Sue is employed as an Outreach Transition Specialist for the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired working with student ages 14 and older throughout the state.

Sue has a BS Degree in Special Education and a Master's Degree in counseling both from Northern State University. Prior to working for SDSBVI Sue was employed for several years with the SD Transition Project. Sue has done numerous presentations on transition, self advocacy and family involvement at both the state and national level.

Ardell Fiedler - SD Rehabilitation Center f/t Blind & Visually Impaired

Ardell completed her Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling before coming to work at SDRC, where she coordinates and is team leader of the Vocational Resource Unit. Ardell recently co-presented on the topic "Securing a Job in the New Millennium" at the 2007 State SDAB Conference. Ardell has cumulative experience of 20 years working with people with disabilities.

Mary Tommeraasen - SD Rehabilitation Center f/t Blind & Visually Impaired -

Mary received a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from Northern State University with an emphasis on Vision Impairment. Mary has spent her entire career working with people with disabilities in varied settings such as: School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Sioux Vocational Training Center, and Crossroads Rehabilitation Center in Indianapolis, IN. Mary currently works as the Employment Skills Supervisor in the SDVR unit and has valuable expertise when helping people assess work readiness skills and abilities.

Ron Gehrts - SD Rehabilitation Center f/t Blind & Visually Impaired

Ron has been an Employment Consultant with the Vocational Resources team for the past four years. Ron came to SDVR from the Adjustment Training Center in Aberdeen where he worked with people with development delays to find employment. Ron works tirelessly to promote people getting connected with businesses and becoming successfully employed. Ron has a good understanding of assistive technology and how to coordinate with businesses.

Gary Mettler - SD Rehabilitation Center f/t Blind & Visually Impaired

Gary has been an Employment Consultant with the Vocational Resources team for the past five years. Gary holds a National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services. Gary has a wide variety of business contacts in the Sioux Falls and surrounding areas and strives to help people find employment with a good wage and advancement potential.

Julie Van Dover - SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Julie has been employed at the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired for 12 years. For 11 of those years she was a classroom teacher at SDSBVI. She is now working as the Outreach Vision Consultant in the eastern part of the state. She obtained her elementary and special education degree from Northern State University in 1995. She then obtained her Low Vision Rehabilitation certification from the Pennsylvania

College of Optometry in 2005. Julie is active in her church, her small town community club, and loves spending time with family and friends.

Amy Scepaniak - SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Amy has been employed at the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired for 15 years working as the Outreach Vision Consultant in the NE part of the State. She graduated from the University of Northern Colorado and received her Certification in Orientation and Mobility in 2000. She obtained her Master's degree in Vision Rehabilitation from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 2004. Amy has served on the Dakotas AER Board for 8 years and is the current past-president.

Doug Halverson- NAPVI

From Fargo, North Dakota, Doug currently serves as the Board President of the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments. Doug is married and has 3 sons, and his youngest, Drew, is visually impaired and attends high school at the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Bob Smith - SDRC

Bob Smith graduated from South Dakota State University with a degree in Psychology in 1977. He recently graduated from a certification program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and received his certification as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist. Bob is currently employed at the South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) in Sioux Falls as a Certified Orientation and Mobility Instructor. He has previously served students at SDRC as the Rehabilitation Counselor, Shop Instructor, Employment Specialist, Vocational Evaluator, and Employment Skills Training Instructor. He also served the southeastern corner of South Dakota for many years as a Field Rehabilitation Teacher. Bob has served in the field of rehabilitation since 1977.

★ Thank You ★

Focus on Success III would not have been possible without the support of vendor and sponsor contributions. Your involvement was invaluable to the success in Focus on SUCCESS!

Focus On Success Vendors

Focus On Success Sponsors

- * Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired
- * Braille & Talking Book Library
- * Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired
- * National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota
- * Region VIII Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program @ UNC
- * SD Association of the Blind
- * SD RehabACTion
- * SD School for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Thanks for joining us, we appreciated the opportunity to focus on success from the past and look forward to future success for each of you!

For further information go to: <http://dhs.sd.gov/sbvi/> or contact us at 1-800-265-9684 and ask for "SBVI".